

## Chapter Two

### A Little Pushy



“Okay, Kitty. I’ll take forty ounces of black curly, twenty-five ounces of the blond straight, and ten of the red straight—and no cigarette smoke. Man, I mean, if there is a hint of smoke in the bag, I’m not paying for it this time. I have a business to run.”

Kitty stands on her hind legs, a six-foot-five cougar with a three-foot arm’s reach, and directs her claws at the two-foot-five skunk who is sporting shades, a gold tooth, and a fur coat.

In strong, sexy Spanglish, she says, “First of all, I no man; I’m a lady. Y dos, I gonna get what I can get at the time, and chu gonna like it, and chu gonna pay me. I bear no responsibility for the type of animals who travel here, my little bicho.”

The businessman politely interjects, “Look, babe. The name’s Skunky. I’m not yo bitcho—or whatever you said.”

The cougar continues, “If chu don’t like it, then chu might want to get out of the business. *Venta de plumas de pollo es risky, mi bicho.*”

“I know it’s risky. And speak English. I can’t think when you talk like that. And stop calling me a bitcho. You know, people get smacked up for calling people a bitcho where I’m from.”

The skunk rubs his head briefly, weighing his options on whether he should get out of the business. He decides that he's just too committed. "Okay, okay. I'm in. Just try to get something I can sell, please!"

"Chu made a wise decision, mi amor. I like chu, and I did not want to cancel your contract—if you know what I mean."

Skunky is a little shocked and confused, not just because Kitty is threatening him—that is normal—but surprisingly, she briefly lost her accent and spoke very clearly.

"I jus kidding!" Kitty winks and rubs Skunky's chin. "It would really break my heart if I had to bite chu into little pieces and feed off of you for a couple of days. But I sure chu would make a delicious meal in a...sardine kinda way, my little sardine."

"I think I prefer bicho over sardine."

Kitty gives two quick claps. "Now, on with the show. I will find these little hairy suckers an give them an old-fashion scalping so chu can sell chu expensive coats, socio."

Skunky interjects again, slowly raising his voice. "English!"

Kitty gives the skunk a wink as her voice slowly rises to a high pitch. "And I sure somebody's gonna give me a bonus for de hard work!"

"Okay. Just take care of it. Thanks for coming."

Kitty quickly stops Skunky in his tracks. "Hold up, honey. Let's no rush." And in near perfect English she says, "Now, it's time for business. When I return with the raw materials, that's going to be \$2,050—due immediately when I return from the job. No grace periods, Skunky."

"What the hell? Two grand! That's double the price!"

Kitty quickly smacks him in the mouth. "I have expenses, mi amor. An watch chu mouth when speaking to a lady!"

Skunky frowns and lightly places his left hand over his mouth. He mumbles, "I got it. I understand. Keep me updated. Just call me ahead of time. Thanks for stopping by."

The skunk tries his best to rush the terrifying cougar out the door of his house in the nicest way possible. Skunky, who lives in the more affluent part of town off Suwanee Dam Road, really doesn't want the grunt workers of his businesses making house calls in his neighborhood. The cougar stops in the doorway before leaving and stares at the skunk for a moment as an added intimidation measure.

"Chu know what?" Kitty blurts out during the stare down as if she forgot something. "I just realized chu did no offer a lady anyting to eat or drink. I starving. I would love somesing to

eat besides...sardines.” Kitty winks again at the skunk. “Oh, I kidding!” The cougar nudges the skunk again.

Skunky pauses. “Do you want something or not?”

“Sí.”

He rushes back to his kitchen to grab something to eat. Kitty decides to explore Skunky’s spacious yet quaint house. She carefully examines the massive living-room wall blanketed with self-portraits.

“Oh my!” she whispers to herself. “Dis skunk really loves himself. He will soon love me more.”

Skunky is clearly agitated. He’s told Kitty never to make house calls; however, she has shown up unannounced. Now he has to react.

“What could she be up to?” he says to himself. He is expecting actors for his new beer commercial. Skunky mumbles, “And now this freaking cougar wants something.” Skunky yells out from the kitchen. “Would a sandwich and a Skunky Brew be okay?”

“Oh, no! I no sandwich kinda lady. I’m thinking more gourmet-type meal—without your skunk juice; it gives me headache.”

Skunky gets an attitude. “Fine! Don’t take the number-one-selling drink in the country.” He mumbles, “No thanks to that prick.” He thinks, *I need her out of here.*

Kitty continues to explore the house to learn more about Skunky. Her keen senses hear someone outside in front of the house. She peeks out the window and sees a suspicious-looking mole with an obvious skunk-like toupee, one dangling earring, and a trench coat in ninety-degree weather, helping two young female bunnies out of an old-school convertible car. Kitty is not about to have any competition, so she slips out of the front door and approaches the group.

“Chu have four seconds to get outta here,” she says.

“Ah, we’re here for the Skunky Brew—”

Kitty growls in a terrifying low roar as if she is going to attack.

The mole is stunned. “I...I...I...Aaagh! He jumps over the car and drops into the driver seat. Before the bunnies can react, he backs out of the driveway—slamming the side of the car into one of the massive trees on the property and leaving the rear passenger door on the lawn. He makes it to the road, slams the car in drive, and floors the gas pedal, leaving the tires spinning for three seconds until the car blasts forward like a starship.

The two bunnies smile nervously at Kitty. They slowly pick up the broken door, holding it in front of them as if it would shield them from the cougar’s attack. They take small steps

backward until they are nearly out of sight, and then they turn and take off running in the direction of the car, screaming, “Wait! Come back!”

Kitty smiles and gently slips back into the house as if nothing has happened. She makes her way to the dining room and carefully lights two candles. She turns the lights down low.

Skunky makes his way back to the living room with a napkin on his shoulder and a nice gourmet microwave pizza that took him longer to prepare than he wanted.

“Here’s your pizza!” He drops the pizza on the table. Taking a second glance at the twinkling candles in the dark dining room, he checks his watch, looks out the front window, and shakes his head. He doesn’t see Kitty, so he goes back into the dining room. He can only hope that she’s gone. He turns the lights up.

Kitty springs from the dark and grabs Skunky. “I know *chu* want me, *mi amor*.”

Skunky is shocked and terrified of the aggressive cougar. Kitty slaps the massive dining-room table with her left paw and quickly shoves everything—from the food to the lit candles—onto the floor and throws Skunky on top of the table. She sticks out her massive tongue and slowly licks the skunk from his chin to the top of his curly hair.

Skunky screams, “Auuuhh! What the hell! Nooo! Stop! Don’t!”

Skunky tries to break Kitty’s strong hold, but her kung-fu grip is too strong. Skunky hasn’t been this nervous since the last day of high school.

“Look, Kitty. I understand I’m a sex symbol. And normally I’m flattered when girls throw themselves at me. But I’m a skunk, and you’re a cougar, and this could never be, babe. And the age gap. I mean, you’re old enough to be my mom’s best friend—”

“Old enough for *what*?”

At this point, Skunky’s stomach starts to bubble up, and he chooses his words carefully. “Old enough to be my big, sexy sister! Yeah! And since we are like brother and sister—no, even closer, we’re business partners—this could never work. Ya know, it would be a SHRM workplace violation.”

Kitty looks at Skunky with skepticism.

Skunky is trying to practice self-control but can’t hold on much longer. Just then, he slowly lets out a foul excretion, surprisingly mixed with the scent of pine trees. Kitty, at this point, is straddling Skunky on top of his dining-room table. They both stop—Skunky stops resisting, and Kitty stops being the aggressor. They stare at each other for a moment. Kitty’s

blank stare slowly turns into a frown, and her eyes start to water as if she's been cutting onions with a dull knife.

Skunky immediately starts with the excuses: "I don't know what happened. That hasn't happened to me before. I think I need a glass of water."

Just then, Skunky smells smoke then realizes his candles aren't on the table. His table is on fire. They both jump off.

"My Grandmama's table!" he yells. The smoke alarm goes off. Skunky rushes to the kitchen to get the fire extinguisher from under the sink. Kitty stands up as tall as she can at the corner of the table, takes off her scarf, and starts to wave it at the fire alarm to get it to stop ringing. Skunky rushes back with the fire extinguisher, slips the safety pin out, and squeezes the trigger, but the fire extinguisher makes the sad sound of an anal exhale as the foam slowly spits out of the nozzle and drools down the front. Skunky shakes it for a moment and then tosses the fire extinguisher to the side. Having no luck with the fire extinguisher, he nervously jogs in place while biting his nails, trying to think how to save his family heirloom. He looks to Kitty for guidance.

"Oh, just spray it already—aren't chu a skunk?" Kitty says.

"I am a civilized skunk, and that is for defense!" he yells.

"Well, defend chu table," Kitty says.

Skunky rocks his head from side to side and yells, "Dammit!" He turns around, does a handstand, and sprays the leg of the table and then the top. He starts to lose his balance, then sprays Kitty down while she stands there with her scarf in hand, swaying back and forth under the fire alarm. She now looks like a waving, yellowish foam statue. The fire alarm finally stops, and she slowly lowers her arm. An uncomfortable silence falls over the room, the only exception the sizzling sound of the burnt wood table cooling down.

"Skunk," Kitty says in an unusually calm demeanor, "get chu things. We need to leave." She slowly wipes the golden discharge out of her left eye and then her right.

Skunky's voice starts to crack as he talks. "I'm not going anywhere with you."

Kitty lowers herself and shakes. "There es a situation with the Skunky Brew factory."

Skunky squints his left eye. "Well, I'm sure you can handle it. I pay you to handle...situations."

"This one is special and needs chu attention. Now get chu hiking boots, suntan lotion, and E-tool. And a barrel of tomato juice."

Skunky pauses. “Ya know, you should’ve led with that. Besides, the whole dinner thing and trying to jump my bones thing—” Skunky holds up his index finger and his thumb. “Just an FYI, you came on a little too strong. Now, what will I need my minishovel for?”

Kitty says, “It’s called an E-tool.”

Skunky says, “No one calls it that but you.”

Skunky’s cell phone rings. He answers. “Charlie, my man! Hey, hey! Calm down. What...Dude, she did what?”

Kitty whispers, “I’ll be in the bathroom.”

Skunky gives Kitty a stern look and continues with his phone conversation.

“Charlie! Charlie! Listen. I need that time slot. Sales are down. Look, if I don’t make money, you don’t make money. We need to reschedule.”